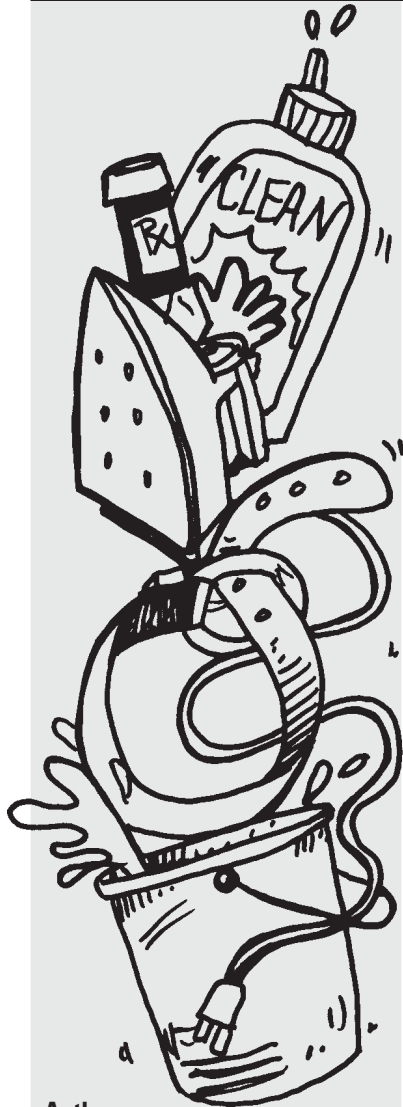


Health & Safety for Caregivers

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Is Your Child Care Business Safe?

Oh! You have such a wonderful business. You get lots of hugs and kisses from the children you care for; of course, these are right after they have just eaten an ice cream cone or a messy cupcake. You get to rock babies to sleep and enjoy playing with them throughout the day. Oh, what a great business! But all of this could be lost if you do not create a safe environment for these children. Have you looked around your child care business home to see what dangers for a child may be lurking around the corner? Here are a few items to help you begin a search of your home to make it the safest place possible for those beautiful children.

Around the House

- Items that might pinch fingers, such as ironing boards, folding chairs, etc.
- Glass doors. This is a time when dirty windows are better than clean windows. Children may walk through a glass door if they can't see the glass. Place transfers or paper strips on the glass to show it is solid. Safety glass is a good precaution.
- Low windows. Install a special type of fastener that allows the window to be opened only a few inches.
- Cords, belts, tassels, drapery cords, and other items that dangle within the toddler's reach. Example: iron cord.
- Items toddlers can get into but can't get out of by themselves. Examples: abandoned chest freezers, refrigerators, and old toy boxes with lids.
- Be sure children cannot get to the road from your yard.
- Have high locks on the exterior doors, so children do not go outside without you knowing.
- Animals. There are insurance, liability, and disease issues involved with having an animal in the house with children.
- Never place a rug at the top of stairs.
- Be cautious of polished floors; children can slip and fall on them easily. Socks without shoes can make a polished floor an ice skating rink.
- Keep safety gates at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Keep sewing materials, especially needles, in a cabinet out of reach of small children.
- Keep knives and sharp objects locked up or out of reach of children.
- Keep guns unloaded, locked up, out of reach, and out of sight from children.

Suffocation

- Never leave plastic bags or any thin clingy type of plastic around the house. Children can suffocate on it.
- Never let small children sleep with stuffed animals or a pillow.
- Do not leave children alone with food or bottles. They may choke.
- Do not let small children play with anything that is small enough to swallow.

Burns

- Never use a portable heater.
- Turn the handles of pans inward, and use the back burner if possible on your stove.
- Check your hot-water heater temperature. If it is too hot, it can cause burns.
- If you are a smoker, do not smoke when children are present in your home, and be sure all matches and lighters are put in a high location.
- Serving dishes stay hot for a long time and can cause burns.

Electricity

- Never let a child touch or play with an electrical plug or outlet. Always use safety covers for outlets.
- Do not buy toys that need to be plugged into electric outlets until child is old enough to understand electricity and the danger of it.

Medicines

- Keep all medicines in a high cabinet and never leave them in the reach of children.
- Do not carry medicines in your handbag. Use a childproof container to carry all medicines.
- Do not let children play with empty medicine bottles or containers.
- Keep medications in the original containers.

Poisons

- Assume all cleaners, beauty products, and other household items will harm children and place out of reach or locked up.
- Store household products in original containers.

Water

- Children can drown in a couple of inches of water.
- There should be no standing water in the children's outdoor play space.
- Obtain written permission from parents before letting children participate in swimming activities.
- Closely supervise children at a swimming site. Never leave them alone.
- Never leave a bucket out even with a small amount of water in it. Young children can fall head first into the bucket and drown.

These safety tips are the beginning steps to creating a safe and fun environment for your child care business. It is impossible to mention all the items to look for in your child care home. Just get down to a small child's level and try to think like they would, to see all the unsafe items that you need to address to become the greatest child care provider.

Sources: Leach, P. (1989). Your Baby and Child. American Acad. of Pediatrics. N.Y.
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